

[152 cont.]

177 community, especially in cases of illness and pestilences, as can
253 be seen in the section "Shamanistic treatment of animals" in
789 Chapter II. If, on one hand, stock grazing partly changed some
of the social system related to magic, on the other hand, at the
same time it has also felt the influence of this institution to the
point of acquiring its own characteristics which differentiate it
from other systems of stock grazing, which follow, in general,
the lines laid down by the Spanish colonists. Magic is sui generis
and plays its part today, as the oldest institution can, in
Guajiro culture.

788 Moreover, not only in the collective sense but in the in-
dividual, the action of magic on the economy shows itself very
clearly in the charm [contra] to make oneself rich, which we
have described in detail in Chapter VI and which, as is logical
within the Guajiro social dynamic, is connected to such im-
portant social matters as status, as we shall see later.

[789] In the chapter which we have called "Magic as the Origin
of the Theater in La Guajira," we may also see the effectiveness
of magic in the private economy, since the owner of a piece of
cultivated land is the one who organizes at his own expense the
dance and fiesta given to attract the blessing of the good spirits,
of Mareiwa on the crops, which require sufficient rain and cer-
tain climatic conditions to ripen. So great is their confidence
that they believe that the more solemn the ceremony of the
Dance of the Kid, the more benefit will be received from the
spirits they invoke and fete, and the greater the probability of
success for the harvest.

182 2. Society. Guajiro society, as we have said, has trans-
ferred a great part of the responsibility for its survival and
●619 stability to magic and has a tranquil confidence in it, convinced
789 of its effectiveness and holding firmly to an institutional determin-
ism which only now is beginning to break down fundamentally.
The cultural institution of magic represents to the individual
Guajiro a system of life, thought, and belief which unites him to
his group as much as does the consanguineous tie and the estab-
lished clan system. Magic is the general and generalized institu-
tion, essentially independent of the characteristic social divisions

[152 cont.]

182 brought about by the family and clan organization; it embraces
789 all the community without distinction and influences and de-
[619] termines it in many of its aspects. [153]

For this reason magic is bound up closely with their regimen for personal security and collective stability in three ways: 1) because it establishes a series of preventative norms aimed at defending the individual and the community from possible evils provoked by the concurrence of natural or supernatural, physical or psychic phenomena; 2) because it possesses adequate methods of treating the evils, which the individuals of the community, by transgressing the cultural patterns, bring upon themselves, thus affecting them in their persons or interests; 3) because it instills the belief in the community that any infraction of the established norms can provoke abnormal happenings which work against their stability.

182 We would say, then, that in the first place the shaman
+756 with his methods of magic is an institution created to maintain, defend, and even restore the regimen of stability to the community and its members as will be seen by the short enumeration of the following facts.

(a) Medication for illness to restore the health of the patients.

b) Propitiation of the rains, indispensable for agriculture, the growth and conservation of pastures (the essential factor for stock grazing), and the maintenance of fresh water in the wells and water holes, as much for the use of the members of the community as for the sustenance of the stock.

c) Warding off pestilences and epidemics, both in humans and in animals, directed first to the saving of life among the individuals of the community and second to the defense of their interests represented by the stock -- the support of their economy and of their existence.

d) Prevention of the effects of dreams, which within Guajiro mental mechanics correspond to actual realities as revelations of the future, anticipatory announcements of things that are going to happen within the community and which will affect one or more persons in their social group. This is one of the origins, as [92] we have seen, for the animal sacrifices which have so much importance in the daily lives of these Indians.

THE BRIGANDS OF CUSINA

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Hills, the most dangerous part of the peninsula. There were ⁰⁰⁰ no chiefs there, no cattle and no other Indians than chance travellers. The new member of our company, however, proved to be lazy and useless from the very first. Francisco had got it into his head that the mestizo had sent his slave with us in order to steal my double-barrelled gun—for which he had asked in return for hiring us the donkeys, an offer that I pretended to take as a jest, since such a gun was worth its weight in gold in Guajira. The mestizo's slave boasted to Francisco that he had killed an Indian, so Francisco went in fear that he would try to kill me in order to get the gun. It certainly was not as bad as that. The man was really quite timid and everybody had their eye on him.

Now began the exciting part of our journey. As we were to go quite close to the dreaded hills, I consulted the only reliable authority I had, the English engineer, Simmons's, ⁵⁷⁹ ₆₁₉ account of them. 'As far as the terrible Cusina are concerned,' he wrote, 'it must be pointed out that their name in the Guajiro tongue means "thief", "brigand". They are not a distinct clan or sub-division, as is sometimes maintained. They have been accused of being cannibals—Reclus, the geographer, wrote that the Guajiro tremble at the thought of being roasted and eaten by them. This, however, is incorrect and there is no proof of any such thing. It is true that the Guajiro fear them and will not pass their haunt, unless they are numerous enough to defend themselves and their herds; but their fear is that which people always have of robbers and brigands, when they have property to protect. In actual fact, it is difficult to find a Guajiro who does not have a relation among the Cusina.' He then gives some examples of this, and continues: 'These Cusina are nothing but a band of robbers expelled from their clans as a result of quarrels, murder or theft, and thereby compelled to plunder in order to live. In order to be better able to defend themselves and to have more success in attack, they have joined together in larger and smaller bands under recognized leaders. Thus they can organize plundering expeditions. If they find themselves strong enough, they will surprise less

579 numerous and worse armed companies and take what they
619 have. The various bands, however, have no mutual respect
or consideration, but will plunder each other if they can.
Perhaps a Guajiro with a relation among the attackers can
count on some consideration, unless his relative is inimical.
However, the Guajiro do sometimes do business with the
[131] Cusina, and also can negotiate and secure the return of
stolen animals. The Cusina's haunt is the Cojoro Hills and
a narrow strip of the lowland is also accounted theirs.' He
then named the leaders of that time and told where they and
their men were. In those days the Cusina had a number of
plantations in the lowland, and also cattle, though they
could not be bothered to look after these, but preferred to
live by banditry. Simmons also says that it was the Cusina
who sold the poisoned arrows.

Nearly forty years had passed since Simmons had
journeyed in those parts and it was obvious that the Cusina
were no longer so numerous nor so dominant, though one
still had to take heed of them and be on one's guard. We
were to learn that they could still make daring raids to parts
far from their haunts. All unattached Indians one met in the
vicinity of the hills were held to be Cusina—it was safest so.

[65] Attack and highway robbery was one thing, ordinary
theft another. If a thief was caught, it cost him dear in com-
pensation, but theft itself, as we heard in connection with
Chinca, was almost regarded as a sport. It was thus com-
mon for poor Indians at least to pinch things from those
who were better off. We, of course, were considered very
rich.

685 It was not to be wondered at if an Indian, having nothing
674 to eat during the worst of the drought, appropriated a bit
of this and that from those who were better off. If he knew
that he would be able to repay it, it became a sort of loan,
without the owner's permission.

Once, some Indians got in ahead of the monks when the
time came to harvest the manioc at the mission's plantation
in Macaira. When the monks came there with the mission's
children to carry it home, all had gone. In the hope of pre-
venting this happening again, the monks decided to com-

THE BRIGANDS OF CUSINA

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plain to the civil authorities; but the government inspector at the coast just smiled and shook his head when they asked if he could do anything about it. 685 674

'The only advice I can give you is that you double your plantation next year. Then perhaps the crop will suffice both for you and the Indians.'

When a monk once reproached an Indian who worked at the mission for pilfering sugar, the Indian replied: 'But, father, every Indian steals!'

As Simmons thought, the Cusina are made up of the bad elements, those outcast from their clans. In the long run no clan can shield a member who commits all sorts of crimes. Some flee to the hills because they cannot pay compensation for someone they have killed, nor count on help from their clan, which perhaps is also without resources. Such people are real outcasts, for anyone can kill them without risk of their clan's exacting vengeance. These outcasts once took refuge in the most desolate hills of the peninsula, Sierra de Cusina, and ever since others have come to replenish their ranks. It was said that they also had women, either captured or runaways. Grazing and water were said to be scarce there. It was a desolate part and none disputed it with the Cusina. They had to live largely by plunder and robbery. They could only keep goats in their hills, so what cattle they rustled, they ate. They were keen to get arms. We were told that none then alive had ever seen a Cusina. They attacked by night and killed everyone. That, of course, was the old Guajiro way: let no one live who might conceivably exact vengeance. 579 64 619

The old accounts from the days of the conquest also mention Cusina, but they must have meant ordinary Guajiro Indians from the area of the Cusina Hills.

The brigands were supposed to have scouts out on the roads, who signalled to their comrades when they scented prey. They very seldom dared attack a well-armed company, as ours was. We three white people each had a gun or rifle and a pistol; and in reserve we had some of my cheap barter pistols. We equipped Francisco with a saloon pistol which had a long barrel and looked impressive. Then we 579

They make designs on
their skin with black stain and tattoo themselves, especially on the arms ³⁰²
and legs, with charcoal dust pigment. At least one of the marks is ³⁰⁴
the same as the tribal brand. ³¹⁷

MANUFACTURES

Women have a rather definite daily routine. They arise before day-⁵¹²
break, milk the cows, and prepare the morning meal for the men, who ⁴⁶²
then go off to fish, hunt, fight, or merely loaf and drink chicha. They
fill their jugs at the water hole and then spend the rest of the day
collecting wild cotton, spinning, weaving, making ropes, grinding corn,
making butter, cheese, and chicha, and performing other household duties.
They milk again in the evening.

Textiles are probably the best Goajiro manufactures. Their other ²⁸⁶
products are pottery (which is the virtual monopoly of a few sibs), bows ³²
and arrows, and saddles and harnesses.

Spinning and weaving.—Wild cotton is collected, the seeds removed ²⁸³
by hand, and small wads are rolled around a thin stick to form small
tubes about half an inch (12.5 mm.) in diameter and 6 inches (15 cm.)
long. These tubes are then spun into thread with the use of a spindle,
one end of which rests in a calabash bowl on the ground. Yarns are ³⁸⁴
colored with vegetable dyes, especially divi-divi.

Almost every household owns a loom, before which the women sit for ²⁸⁶
hours weaving hammocks and bright-colored belts for men and horses.
The warp is made from one long continuous thread wound around two
thick horizontal poles, the upper one firmly attached to two uprights,
the lower one hanging loose and maintaining the tension. As the work
progresses, the cloth is moved forward around the poles, so that an
endless strip of cloth is produced, which is then cut. Shuttles are passed
through by hand, the warp being shifted by means of a threading arrange-
ment which takes hold of alternate strands. On a piece of cloth about 2
yards wide an inch of weave every three hours is considered very fast
work.

Containers.—Most cooking utensils are made of crude earthenware by ³²³
a few tribes in the vicinity of the Teta, a peak near the middle of the ⁴⁴⁵
peninsula. Spoons and forks are cut out of calabashes. Some Indians ⁴³⁹
possess enameled mugs and pots obtained from itinerant traders.

Weapons.—Almost every man possesses a good rifle. Cartridges are ⁴⁴¹
scarce and expensive and must be smuggled in. Firearms are conse-
quently reserved mainly for warfare, and the bow and arrow is the
everyday weapon.

The bow is made from the hard, springy wood of the black palm. It is
almost round in cross section, 3 to 6 feet (1.7 to 2 m.) long, and strung
with a special steel cord. The end which rests on the ground is protected

121 the individual who was to provide the raw material for this article. This is more or less a biography of the man who was at the same time guide, interpreter, and driver for the author and with whom extensive conversations, both formal and informal, took place.²

199 Guajiro culture, like most native cultures in the New World, has suffered great acculturation due to the impact with European ways of life. Some of these cultures have been more resistant to change than others; and within one culture, certain aspects have remained closer to the traditional forms than have others. In Guajiro culture, it is perhaps the social organization, with all of its ramifications, that has resisted recent acculturation
 194 more than the other aspects of the culture. We know very little
 193 of the pre-caste culture of the Guajiro and even Juan de Castellanos, writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, describes them as having numerous herds of domestic animals.

554 Nowhere in the literature on the Guajiros is there an example of status having been acquired outside the traditional way and the present writer, in his two field trips to the region, has found only the case here described.

• 619 As it is not the purpose of this article to give a full description
 614 of the social organization of the Guajiro, it will be sufficient to state that the tribe is divided into some twenty-five matrilineal clans, of which about eleven are large and rather powerful in their socio-economic aspects, and the rest—due mainly to the fact of having a small number of members—are weak, and
 428 relatively unimportant. Inheritance is along the mother's line, an individual acquiring property from his maternal uncle. The
 609 avunculate in all its social and economic aspects, is a very important institution (Santa Cruz, 1941).

614 Traditionally the clans are exogamous with incest taboos and
 582 punishments for those who break them. This exogamic characteristic of the clan is apparently disappearing, as several cases of endogamous unions were found among the Guajiro living in the outskirts of the city of Maracaibo. No endogamous marriages, however, were found in the Guajiro proper by the present writer, although Gregorio Hernandez de Alba (1936) has

² Proper names, especially of the subject, have all been disguised in some way, so as to spare personal feelings.